

CLAIMS:

1. A low-pressure mercury-vapor discharge lamp being operable in a first and a second mode of operation, the discharge lamp comprising:
 - a discharge vessel (10) enclosing, in a gastight manner, a discharge space (13) provided with a filling of mercury and an inert gas,
 - 5 - the discharge vessel (10) comprising electrodes (5; 6) arranged in the discharge space (13) for maintaining a discharge in the discharge space (13) while the discharge lamp operates in the first mode of operation,
 - at least one of the electrodes (5; 6) being operated on a DC or AC power supply for drawing a discharge current across the electrode (5; 6) while the discharge lamp
10 operates in the second mode of operation.
2. A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that both electrodes (5; 6) operate on a DC or AC power supply while the discharge lamp operates in the second mode of operation.
- 15 3. A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that, while the lamp operates in the second mode of operation, the electrodes (5; 6) are independent with respect to each other.
- 20 4. A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the discharge lamp, while operating in the second mode of operation, is electrically disconnected from the power supply on which the discharge lamp operates in the first mode of operation.
- 25 5. A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that when a power failure occurs while the discharge lamp operates in the first mode of operation, the second mode of operation causes the discharge lamp to operate in the second mode of operation.

6. A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that a means associated with the second mode of operation detects the power failure when the discharge lamp is in the first mode of operation.
- 5 7. A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the discharge lamp, while operating in the second mode of operation, operates on a current that is less than 20% of the nominal current when the discharge lamp operates in the first mode of operation.
- 10 8. A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the discharge lamp is powered by a battery while operating in the second mode of operation.